

STATE OF IOWA  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE:  U S WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC., AND QWEST INC.	DOCKET NO. SPU-99-27
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**ORDER DENYING REQUEST FOR CHANGES TO MONTHLY SERVICE  
QUALITY REPORTS AND ORDERING STAFF AUDIT**

(Issued January 8, 2002)

On March 17, 2000, the Utilities Board (Board) issued an order in this docket approving a proposed settlement and requiring that Qwest Corporation (Qwest) file monthly service quality reports. On July 2, 2001, Qwest filed a proposal to modify the service reporting requirements. Qwest states that the existing reports include information at the wire center level and on a statewide basis. Qwest proposes to limit the reports to the statewide level of detail.

Qwest also proposes to change certain of the service quality measurements to reflect proposals Qwest is presenting in other states, in order to standardize reporting requirements across the states. Specifically, Qwest proposes to change the measurements for service interruptions, customer trouble reports, call answering intervals, and service connection reporting.

On July 12, 2001, the Consumer Advocate Division of the Department of Justice (Consumer Advocate) filed a response to Qwest's proposal. Consumer

Advocate opposes the wholesale elimination of reporting requirements at the wire center level. Consumer Advocate argues that service quality reporting must be at the wire center level in order to adequately monitor Qwest's ongoing compliance with the settlement agreement.

The Board will deny the request to modify the monthly service quality reports at this time. If the current reporting format were changed by deleting detail and altering some of the underlying measurements, the information filed to date would not be directly comparable with future reports. This would make it difficult, if not impossible, to track changes in Qwest's service quality over time. Moreover, the elimination of wire center data would make it much more difficult to identify specific locations where unusual or localized problems may occur in the future.

Furthermore, the Board will direct its staff to conduct an audit of Qwest's service quality results and reports. The Board believes a variety of circumstances indicate that an audit would be appropriate at this time.

First, the Board is aware of a recent Qwest announcement regarding further reductions in the number of service personnel employed by Qwest. While the Board does not have Iowa-specific information regarding these reductions, the magnitude of the announced cutbacks is sufficient to raise concerns regarding Qwest's continued ability to provide adequate service quality in Iowa.

Second, the Board believes an audit at this time will provide a reliable base line of Qwest's service quality performance. This will aid in assuring that service quality is not adversely affected by staffing changes.

Finally, some of the service quality obligations agreed to by Qwest as a part of the settlement in this docket relate to individual customer transactions (such as the cellular loaner program for held orders). Individual customers typically would not be aware of the provisions of the settlement and may not be in a good position to evaluate Qwest's performance thereunder, so the Board cannot rely entirely upon customer satisfaction reports in verifying Qwest's continuing compliance with the requirements of the settlement agreement. A staff audit will help to verify that Qwest's service quality obligations are being satisfied.

In addition to the audit, the Board will require Qwest to file quarterly reports for calendar year 2002 detailing the type, number, and location of service employees reduced and a realistic assessment of the impact on service to Iowa customers. Because Qwest personnel serving Iowa customers are often based elsewhere, this report must cover all reductions, both inside and outside the state, that may affect Iowa service.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:**

1. The proposal to modify the monthly service quality reports filed by Qwest Corporation on July 2, 2001, is denied.

2. Board staff is directed to perform an audit of Qwest's service quality results and to file an audit report in this docket when the audit is completed.

3. Qwest shall file quarterly reports concerning service employee reductions as described in the body of this order, beginning on or before April 15, 2002, and on or before the 15th of July and October of 2002 and January of 2003.

**UTILITIES BOARD**

/s/ Diane Munns

/s/ Mark O. Lambert

ATTEST:

/s/ Judi K. Cooper  
Executive Secretary

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2002.